

**California Department of Social Services
Title IV-E Child Welfare Waiver Demonstration Capped Allocation Project**

Annual Progress Report

This second annual progress report covers the reporting period from July 1, 2008 through June 30, 2009, and provides an overview of project monitoring tasks, county implementation activities, and evaluation efforts for the California Title IV-E Child Welfare Waiver Demonstration Capped Allocation Project (CAP) as required in Section 5.4 of the federal Waiver Terms and Conditions.

I. OVERVIEW

On March 31, 2006, the California Department of Social Services (CDSS) received approval from the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services for the CAP. The five-year demonstration project allows counties flexibility to use federal and state foster care maintenance and administrative funds for the provision of direct services to children and their families and will support child welfare practice, program, and system improvements for early intervention, reunification efforts, and reduction in out-of-home placements. The target population is Title IV-E and non-Title IV-E eligible children ages zero through nineteen currently in out-of-home placement, or who are at risk of entering or re-entering foster care. Any foster care savings that occur as a result of the waiver demonstration will be reinvested by the participating counties in child welfare services program improvements. Alameda County and Los Angeles County are the two participating counties. The demonstration project was implemented on July 1, 2007.

II. CDSS ACTIVITIES TO IMPLEMENT DEMONSTRATION

During the second year, the CDSS cross-divisional implementation team continued to perform fiscal systems activities and provide the required project monitoring and oversight. Activities have focused on operating the fiscal claiming and payment system; technical assistance to the counties to address various fiscal, program, and operational issues; and contract oversight and support for the evaluation.

The CDSS Fiscal Workgroup staff conducted periodic conference calls and meetings with the counties to review claiming activities and expenditure reports and a forum to resolve any issues or problems. Conference calls were conducted to address overpayment procedures for the CAP counties, annual reconciliation reports and identification of reinvestment savings, requirements for use of waiver and non-waiver allocations, and county requests for adjustments and changes to the claiming process.

Dedicated activities under the Financial Services Bureau for year two have included: monthly advances/offsets and quarterly payments/offsets to the two waiver counties, collection and reporting of monthly and quarterly claim/payment data to the waiver counties and other CDSS units, responding to payment inquiries, analysis of actual expenditures versus budgeted allocations to determine advance methodology and

advance amounts to the counties, review of actual expenditures reported to ensure proper waiver/non-waiver ratios and overmatch are applied to each payment, and staff participation in CAP project team meetings.

The Federal Foster Care IV-E 1 Reports for year two were submitted via electronic submission. The June 2008 quarter was submitted on September 30, 2008; the September 2008 quarter was submitted on December 31, 2008; the December 2008 quarter was submitted on March 31, 2009; and the March quarter was submitted on June 30, 2009. County Fiscal Letter No. 08/09-30 issued on December 23, 2008, provided the planning allocation for Fiscal Year (FY) 2008-09 for the waiver counties. As identified in the previous federal progress report, based on county adjustment claims for Fiscal Year 2007-08 processed through June 30, 2009, the CAP counties have realized significant fiscal savings from the first year. The final county savings will be determined by CDSS in September 2009, after the June 2008 quarter adjustment claim is audited and closed out.

The Children and Family Services Division (CFSD) Title IV-E Waiver Unit is the program area responsible for implementing the waiver demonstration project. CFSD program staff activities for year two have included: coordinating CDSS project management and project team activities; participation in the CDSS Fiscal Workgroup; CAP project team meetings; monthly monitoring with county waiver coordinators; reviewing and analyzing project data; federal progress reporting activities; maintaining project documentation, addressing waiver related program and policy issues; providing technical assistance (TA) and coordination for county TA requests; preparing CDSS responses to waiver related inquiries, attendance at CAP related county meetings; and county site visits.

Specific county requests included: access to Child Welfare Services/Case Management System (CWS/CMS) for probation, clarification of program requirements for state general fund allocations included in the waiver, impact of new federal legislation on the two CAP counties, pending request for the Federal Medical Assistance Percentages (FMAP) rate increase and revised federal waiver terms and conditions, and impact of proposed state budget reductions.

The Estimates and Research Services Branch (ERSB) continues to be responsible for performing all oversight and monitoring functions for the evaluation. ERSB supports the CAP by providing assistance to ensure the evaluator is able to obtain necessary fiscal and outcome data sources. ERSB staff activities for year two have included: monitoring the evaluation contract and evaluator activities; reviewing and approving invoices; processing a budget adjustment; coordination of fiscal data sources for the evaluation including CDSS fiscal training sessions for the CAP; reviewing fiscal claiming reports; resolving fiscal issues; developing county cost spreadsheets and comparisons; researching outcome data source issues; analyzing county project data; analyzing impacts of federal and state legislation on the CAP; participating in CAP project meetings; facilitating the State/County Evaluation Workgroup meetings; and attending the Los Angeles County regional community forums held in June 2009.

The CDSS has been addressing implementation for Public Law 110-351, Fostering Connections to Success and Increasing Adoptions Act of 2008. Any impacts to the CAP counties will be identified as part of the statewide implementation process. State legislation (Assembly Bill 12) was introduced to implement the federal provisions in the current session; however, this bill is now in suspense by the Appropriations Committee. This process has been delayed due to the potential impacts of the state budget crisis.

In March 2009, CDSS requested discussions with the Administration for Children and Families (ACF) for developing a mutually agreeable strategy to adjust the federal capped allocation in response to the passage of the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009. This adjustment is needed in order to apply the provisions for increasing the FMAP to the two CAP counties that are currently operating under their established capped allocation. ACF and the Office for Management and Budget are currently reviewing the finalized figures and CDSS' request for approval. Additional general fund was also added to the waiver non-base funds for new premises included in the Governor's Budget.

Fiscal challenges have continued due to the historic and increasing budget deficit in California and remain an ongoing concern. As a result of this fiscal crisis, the May 2009 Revise Budget Proposal included a ten percent reduction to the program rates for foster care group home, foster family agency and seriously emotionally disturbed providers for all counties statewide, including the CAP counties. The Governor has recently signed a revised budget package that includes the ten percent reduction as well as other reductions that are currently being evaluated for impact to the CAP counties.

STATUS OF THE DEMONSTRATION

Alameda County

A. OVERVIEW

The Alameda County Social Services Agency (ACSSA), Department of Children and Families Services (Alameda DCFS) and the Probation Department are using the spending flexibility under the CAP for a series of proactive reinvestments to better direct resources to prevention, early intervention, and long-term family-based strategies with the goal of serving youth and their caretakers with localized, familial, and neighborhood-based support services. Strategies and activities identified for implementation build on the continuation and expansion of current county initiatives and projects.

Both Departments are continuing to implement their phase one CAP strategies into year two as well as proposing new strategies to be implemented. Probation strategies are targeted to reduce unnecessary out-of-home placement referrals and a reduction in the average monthly rate of out-of-home placements for probation youth. The Alameda DCFS strategies being implemented to date include:

- The Alternative Road to Safety (ARS) prevention program;
- Voluntary Diversion Program for non-child welfare relative guardianships;
- Front-end family finding to support initial placements with relatives;
- Expanded Kinship Support to increase supports for relative placements;
- Enhanced County Counsel activities to reduce time children are in care;
- New ARS-Family Maintenance program targeted at reducing re-entry rates;
- Hiring additional Child Welfare Workers to increase the ability of staff to provide intensive services to families, reduce caseload to staff ratio, restructure group home units, and expand Team Decision Making (TDMs);
- Enhance County Foster Parent recruitment by strengthening community outreach and collaboration through the Faith Initiative and implementing a child care option;
- Enhance the staffing for the Parent Advocate Program;
- Create a visitation center for families in the reunification program; and,
- Fund a coordinator position to enhance the safety net for emancipated youth.

Alameda DCFS continued to experience decreasing caseload trends into year two. As of June 1, 2009, based on county reported CWS/CMS data, 3,048 children were receiving child welfare services. Of this total, 1,996 children are in out-of-home placement: 1,012 are placed with relatives, 119 are placed in county licensed foster homes, 632 are placed in foster family agencies, and 233 are placed in group homes.

For Probation, the out-of-home placement caseload has decreased from 231 to 168, which reflects an approximately 27 percent change since the CAP began in July 2007. In addition, the county has identified that the number of probation youth served by the Family Preservation Unit (FPU) has increased from 97 to 165, evidencing a significant increase in FPU services of approximately 70 percent under the CAP.

A. ADMINISTRATIVE ACTIVITIES

Beginning mid-year, Alameda County identified reinvestment savings and sought Board of Supervisor approval for use of the funds. On February 23, 2009, the proposed year two strategies were presented to the Board of Supervisors Social Services Committee and were then approved to move forward with implementation (See Appendix A). However, due to the potential impacts of the state budget, the Department has not moved forward on any of the newly proposed strategies that had a cost associated with the exception of some additional staff hired from surrounding counties. While the county has identified their waiver impacts as system-wide, they are continuing to utilize and identify program activities to meet their CAP goals and objectives. Many of the strategies are expansions of current, pre-waiver activities and/or a part of other reform initiatives, in addition to other new strategies. The county reported that each year they have established a focus area for their reinvestments. The focus in year one was on developing and enhancing prevention and diversion programs, while year two's focus has been on strengthening preventive and supportive services for children and families.

Ongoing project administration has continued with the Alameda DCFS two core workgroups that meet monthly to discuss CAP implementation strategies. The Implementation Team oversees planning and coordinates the CAP implementation activities with the Department and Division and consists of the Department's senior managers and representatives from finance, data and research, probation, and the Casey Family Programs. The Executive Team provides implementation monitoring, including the budget and any barriers encountered and consists of the Department Head, Agency Director, Finance Director, Probation Chief, Assistant Chief and Department Division Directors. The Implementation Team is working with the Casey Family Programs in the development of the data warehouse as well as funding staff liaison positions within Alameda DCFS and the Probation Department.

Alameda DCFS has presented and will continue to present regular updates on CAP activities to the Board of Supervisors, various community organizations, and various public and private partners. County representatives participated in a panel presentation on the CAP for the statewide Child Welfare Council during July 2009. Tentative planning for a follow-up community forum will occur in the next reporting period.

Alameda DCFS also participates in the monthly phone conferences held with Los Angeles County and the CDSS Project Manager and are beginning to establish regular county only on-site meetings to discuss various waiver related topics such as reinvestment strategies, fiscal concerns, and probation specific issues.

EVALUATION ACTIVITIES AND DATA TRACKING

As of June 2009, the state evaluator has completed another round of staff focus groups and individual interviews with both Alameda DCFS and Probation. The county has continued to refine their data dashboards used for internal tracking to assist management in monitoring the effectiveness of planned activities and overall caseload and placement numbers. A current version of the Alameda County Title IV-E Waiver Dashboard is provided in Appendix A.

Alameda County in concert with Casey Family Programs and International Business Machines (IBM) are building a data warehouse projected to be fully implemented prior to the beginning of 2010. Over year one, the first phase of the data warehouse implementation was completed that included hiring a contractor, building the server, and determining the data systems to be inputted during phase one. During this annual reporting period, the infrastructure implementation was completed with the software install done by January 2009. IBM and ACSSA Information Systems Department (ISD) worked with Alameda DCFS Executives and Managers to develop the cross-system reports. ISD also worked closely with the Alameda DCFS Research and Evaluation to define reporting needs and build future analytical reporting capacity.

The Social Services Integrated Reporting System (SSIRS) is in its final implementation stages and began production during July with full production by September 2009. In the last six months, the county has installed and developed a business intelligent data warehouse using state of the art technology whose early performance has surpassed the county's initial expectations. Six systems (one more than planned) have all been successfully incorporated and mapped into SSIRS. These systems include: California Welfare Integrated Network (CalWIN) client eligibility system, Child Welfare Services Case Management System (CWS/CMS), the adult and aging Case Management, Information and Payroll System (CMIPS), Employment Services Client database, Adoptions database, and Probation Department's client database, are all successfully incorporated and mapped into SSIRS. Other systems such as Medi-Cal and Housing Authority will also be added to SSIRS.

With the new Child Welfare Client Overview Report available, the county can see at a glance the status of any client in any program as well as staff associated with that client. Further development of this report will show the support services and programs for each individual client. SSIRS has powerful drill down capabilities and can view a program at the highest agency level all the way down to the client case. Next steps for implementation will include maximizing SSIRS' charting and dashboard capabilities.

Effective June 30, 2009, IBM is no longer on site and has turned SSIRS over to ACSSA. There were a number of hands-on and knowledge transfer sessions between the IBM and SSA technical teams as part of this process. The ACSSA team is now capable of continuing the development and operations of SSIRS. Formal skills training in each of the SSIRS four major systems will begin and last for at least one year.

As referenced in the previous progress report, computer based training modules were purchased and deployed by January 2009, for super users to learn Cognos queries and complex reporting functions. This began as data became available in the warehouse beginning in March 2009. Super users will assist general Cognos users with learning to navigate Cognos for general reporting efforts. A sample of the Cognos Child Welfare Client Overview application screen can be found in Appendix A.

C. IMPLEMENTED STRATEGIES AND EXPENDITURES

ALAMEDA DCFS

As referenced above, Alameda DCFS is using the fiscal flexibility under the CAP to fund a number of existing and new programs. The county has identified that over the second year of the CAP, out of home assistance costs have continued to decline. The decrease over year one was \$55 million and at the end of this year the decrease is \$47 million. The CAP Workgroups and Child welfare staff continue to identify system improvements under the County System Improvement Plan (SIP), which have been or will be funded by capturing the assistance cost savings. These system improvements cost \$4 million in year two, but are expected to increase to roughly \$16 million in year three of the project, as new staffing and contracts come on line.

In addition, starting in year two of the CAP, reinvestment savings was made available to the Probation Department. These funds were slightly above \$2 million in year two, and will increase in the future if further reductions occur in Probation out-of-home placement costs. At the present time, ACSSA estimates that there is an additional \$12 million waiver revenue to be programmed for the final three years of the CAP.

Alameda DCFS provided updates and expenditures for the following CAP strategies:

The existing *ARS Prevention Program* is now being funded by Alameda DCFS as part of the CAP with an annual cost of \$1,500,000. ARS is the Alameda DCFS differential response system providing intensive home-based family support services. ARS services can last up to nine months and include assessments, family care plans, weekly home visits, case management, linkages to service providers/community referrals, and support from Specialty Providers Teams. The client to staff ratio is 13:1.

First implemented in 2002 as a collaboration between ACSSA, community-based providers, and Every Child Counts, the program served primarily children ages zero to five in three targeted neighborhoods. This program is now being expanded under the CAP and will be able to provide services countywide to children and youth ages zero to eighteen. Since January 2009, 47 families have been or are currently being served.

Alameda DCFS is expanding the ARS model by implementing a program for families in the Family Maintenance (FM) Program. The *ARS FM program* is being funded annually at \$1,865,000 in order to reduce re-entry rates into foster care. This program was fully implemented in January 2009. To date, 55 families have been served. Additionally, this contract was expanded to include enhanced support to families in the kinship program.

The *Voluntary Diversion Program* to non-child welfare relative guardianships has costs of \$750 to \$900 per case. This program was implemented during the first year of the CAP and has served six families to date for an approximate total cost of \$4,700.

Front End Family Finding has been enhanced to support initial placements with relatives in the amount of \$334,976 to date. Five additional clerks to conduct searches for relatives via a search program called Accurint were funded during the first year. This program has been successful in not only locating relatives, but also has resulted in an increase in the number of fathers and paternal family members coming forward. In the current year, the county finalized the plans for front end family finding and engagement and determined that they will contract out some of the family finding services and combine them with the placement program.

Alameda DCFS has funded *Enhanced County Counsel activities* for costs of \$314,160. The intention of this strategy is to provide the needed support in the court room to reduce the number of continuances and other needless delays that hinder reunification and relative placement. As of June 2009, Alameda DCFS was only able to hire one of the intended four additional county counsel staff before the county was given a hiring freeze due to the Governor's budget.

The *One Child, One Placement Program* was implemented in October 2008, and this restructure of the placement activity within Alameda DCFS has resulted in an increase in the number of children placed in relative homes as a first placement as well as a substantial decrease in the number of children placed in group home care. The county reported that as of June 2009, there has been a 3.6 percent increase in relative placements and a 23 percent decline in group home placements. In addition, the county identified there has been a 33 percent increase in the number of children placed in county foster homes, which they cite an indication of a reduction in foster family agency and group care placements.

Over year one, for the *expansion of Reunification and Permanency TDMs*, there was an intensified effort to educate and encourage staff to utilize reunification and permanency TDM's. As of June 2009, there have been 814 total TDM's with 470 reunification TDM's and seven permanency TDM's. During year two, two additional TDM facilitators were hired to increase the capacity for both types of TDM's as well as to add additional time slots for evening TDM's.

The county has proposed *hiring additional child welfare staff* to increase the ability to provide intensive case management services with an annual cost of \$6,600,000. As referenced above, in February 2009, the county was authorized to hire 30 new child welfare project positions, five new child welfare supervisor project positions and two clerical project positions. As of June 2009, Alameda DCFS was able to hire 18 of the 30 positions by offering an intra-county transfer opportunity for existing child welfare staff being laid off by surrounding counties. Additionally, the promotional process for the five child welfare supervisor positions was started; however, due to the hiring freeze they have not begun the hiring process for the clerical positions.

Alameda DCFS identified, based upon program assignment, they are preparing these new positions to test the ability of staff to do some of the more intensive family engagement work associated with the increased family finding activity; to increase visitation based upon Structured Decision-Making (SDM) risk level; and to carry combined caseloads versus the current specialized caseloads.

In addition, they have restructured and redeployed staff who had been assigned to designated group home units in order to break down any institutional biases regarding children in group home placements. By these efforts, the county expects to refocus staff on permanency options and enhanced transition services for the older youth.

Enhanced Foster Parent Recruitment has funding of \$775,000 under the CAP. During this reporting period, Alameda DCFS continued their collaboration with the faith community for community outreach and awareness efforts for enhanced foster parent recruitment. In the upcoming year, the county will focus on support and retention of not only foster parents, but also relative caregivers using their collaboration with the faith community initiative and Casey Family Programs.

During this year the county also proposed a child care option as a recruitment/retention incentive for foster parents; however, due to California's budget crisis this will not be able to be implemented until year three of the project.

As part of year two, the county proposed \$300,000 in funding for an *Enhanced Parent Advocate Program* to focus on strengthening partnerships and to hire additional parent advocates. Parent advocates in Alameda County have shown that supporting parents entering and going through the child welfare system increases families to be better able to cooperate and participate with the child welfare system. Furthermore, it has broken down barriers that have often have prevented families from reunifying in a timely manner. As of June 2009, these advocates have provided support to 137 families.

Alameda DCFS plans to *create a Visitation Center* for families with annual funding of \$1,000,000. During the last six months, the county has finalized plans to create a center for families that is child and family friendly and is centrally located. Focus groups have been conducted to find out what the needs are for families who have supervised or out of home visitation plans. As of June 2009, plans include the preparation of a Request for Proposal to begin in fall 2009.

To support an *enhanced safety net for emancipated youth* funding of \$130,000 in year two has been proposed to fund a coordinator position. The county works closely with their youth advisory board, the Youth Adult Partnership (YAP), to explore and develop strategies to stabilize and assist youth emancipating from foster care. To better coordinate these activities, Alameda DCFS has requested and hired a full time coordinator position to serve as the lead for this program.

PROBATION

Probation efforts over year two have included implementing Multi-Disciplinary Teams (MDTs) to assess failing youth who are at risk of out-of-home placement; expanding field units engaged in providing front end, preventative services; and continued planning and development of the new case management system, Probation Rehabilitation Intensive Services and Management (PRISM), that is designed to track placement, Family Preservation Unit (FPU), and camp youth episodes.

In the last six months Probation has continued work to improve data collection and screening processes for reviewing all out-of-home placement recommendations. Additionally, Probation has developed/expanded a number of collaborative models of intervention that support multi-disciplinary partners and community stakeholders to maintain youth in their homes/community if possible and to receive them back in a timely and successful manner if placement is needed.

As previously reported, the Probation Department has been very limited in their ability to collect and analyze important data related to their CAP strategies due to both the antiquated Juvenile Court Information System (JUVIS) and VersaForm database. The new PRISM system that is being incrementally built through a contract with the central Information Technology Department (ITD) and key Probation staff, will replace JUVIS. Due to numerous central ITD staff changes, the PRISM development has been delayed and is not anticipated to go live until 2010. Many of the case management and report capabilities, including placement data are planned for development after the “go live” date. After consideration of the PRISM development timeline, waiver goals, and limited capabilities of VersaForm, the decision was made to replace VersaForm with an Access database that will eventually be connected to PRISM.

In the first part of the year, Probation program and central ITD staff reviewed the VersaForm elements and developed expanded capabilities for the replacement system, including the ability to track primary issues resulting in out-of-home placement, time in placement, and transition data for youth in group home care. This new Placement Tracking database system will allow placement staff access to important placement data and will allow Probation to better assess progress with CAP implementation goals. Pending this implementation, weekly reports on the number of youth in group home care and staff’s monthly report on the number of Family Preservation youth are shared with Alameda DCFS staff to include in the Waiver Dashboard.

At present, the new Placement Tracking database is in testing stages, and upon completion, all FPU and Placement staff will be trained to access information that has previously been cumbersome to obtain or unavailable. The database will include information for all minors with placement orders and will support timely case monitoring and decision-making. The existing VersaForm database and the new Placement Tracking database have been provided to the data warehouse following approval from the Juvenile Presiding Judge to share the information with a signed agreement between Probation and Social Services and signed confidentiality agreements with the data

warehouse staff. Both Alameda DCFS and Probation hope to obtain a data comparison within the next quarter that will identify families involved with both DCFS and Probation.

In April 2009, a screening committee was implemented for all out-of-home placement recommendations. Both the mental health and medical service agencies at Juvenile Hall are notified of the cases to be screened and have representatives at the committee to discuss the minor with Probation managers from Camp, FPU, and Placement, in addition to the Probation Officer that is responsible for submitting a recommendation to the Court.

The development of a MDT process for the Probation continuum of care has continued over this annual reporting period. Probation's Youthful Offender Block Grant (YOBG) funding has resulted in the ability to further develop the MDT process for probation youth. A consultant was hired to develop the MDT process plan. A Memorandum of Understanding with the County Behavioral Health Services is in place for a psychiatric social worker to be part of the team. Interviews were conducted and although a hiring freeze delayed the process, the exemption from the freeze occurred in February 2009.

The YOBG funding is also being utilized to transition county-wide Youth Service Centers to provide case management (CM) services to youth and their families that are referred to the MDT. Although the Youth Service Centers have traditionally received Juvenile Probation and Camp (JPCF) funding for CM services to youth that are primarily defined in statute as truant/incorrigible/runaway youth, they have served probation youth and as a result of JPCF funding cuts, they have agreed to transition part of their services to MDT referred youth and their families. Training on the probation process and the case manager's role as a family partner that will assist the family to understand and adhere to probation/court orders and engage in supportive services in their neighborhood was initiated. During the last six months, the new CM/YOBG/ MDT intervention for youth that are failing Probation has received 132 referrals. Case Managers from nine Youth Service Centers throughout the County, that contract with Probation, serve as family advocates within the minor's community, to assist with those barriers that are preventing successful Probation compliance. Upon referral to the program, the Psychiatric Social Worker under contract to Probation through the Alameda County Behavioral Health Care Services, accesses mental health records and coordinates with the Case Manager and assigned Probation Officer to review the minor's case and strategize on how to best assist the youth/family. MDTs are available and allow the family, Case Manager, other community supports, the Probation Officer, and the Social Worker to develop strength-based, family-focused plans that may curtail a violation of Probation and escalation to out-of-home placement and stabilize the youth/family with the assistance of community supports.

Probation views these CM services as providing significant supports for probation youth/families through community-based organizations that understand the Probation/Court directives and the services available in their immediate community. This added partnership will promote positive transition through the probation process and after juvenile justice involvement provide for on-going services and support.

Other collaborative projects that support CAP goals include a proposed Assembly Bill (AB) 129 pilot project by Alameda DCFS and Probation to designate one Supervisor from each agency that will be housed at the Juvenile Justice Center and assist with the needed coordination of information to identify the best plan/recommendation for identified youth that are involved with both systems. The AB 129 pilot is subject to the provisions of Welfare and Institutions Code Section 241.1 and will include enhanced interventions for ten DCFS and ten Probation youth.

Probation is also collaborating with the Oakland Unified School District (OUSD) and case managers from five community-based organizations that contract with the City of Oakland/Measure Y. Identified youth from Oakland that are detained in Juvenile Hall and have problematic school records and other at-risk community challenges will be matched with a case manager that will coordinate with the OUSD manager and Probation Officer to secure an appropriate school/learning placement upon release from custody. This will include assistance with school attendance for youth that are placed locally. Training for the case managers, OUSD, and Probation will start in July 2009.

Upcoming activities for Probation will include re-organization of the Juvenile Services Division due to a potentially large reduction in the Probation Officer work force, training on the new Placement Tracking database, on-going development of the screening committee process and the CM/YOBG/MDT collaboration, preparation for the 241.1 pilot, implementation of Probation/OUSD/Measure Y strategies, and closer collaboration between Early Periodic Screening, Diagnosis and Treatment (EPSDT) Services and placement youth/families.

Los Angeles County

A. OVERVIEW

Under the CAP, the Los Angeles County Department of Children and Family Services (LA DCFS) is using the financial flexibility to make strategic investments in structural and programmatic reforms needed to better serve children and families. These reform efforts build on significant systems improvements already underway among county departments and community partners in Los Angeles County. The LA DCFS and Probation CAP strategies being implemented during year two include:

LA DCFS

- Expansion of Family Team Decision Making (FTDM) Conferences;
- Focused Family Finding and Engagement through Pilot Specialized Youth Permanency (YP) Units at Three Regional Offices;
- Up-front Assessments on High-Risk Cases for Domestic Violence, Substance Abuse and Mental Health Issues;
- Promoting Safe and Stable Families (PSSF) Programs;
- Countywide Prevention Initiative/Differential Response; and
- Regional Office Community Partnering

Probation

- Enhanced Cross-Systems Case Assessment and Case Planning (CSA);
- Expansion and Enhancement of Functional Family Therapy (FFT);
- Restructure of Placement Services;
- Utilization of Aftercare Support Services; and
- Prospective Authorization and Utilization Review Unit (PAUR)

The decreasing out-of-home placement caseload trend has continued into year two. During the first project year July 1, 2007, to June 30, 2008 LA DCFS reported a decrease of ten percent (from 23,561 to 21,194). During the second year July 1, 2008, to June 20, 2009, the decrease was twelve percent (from 21,194 to 18,672). This reflects an approximately 20 percent change in the out-of-home placement caseload since the beginning of the CAP. LA DCFS fact sheets containing CWS/CMS caseload data for the reporting period are provided in Appendix B.

For Probation, the average monthly population for probation youth residing in group homes decreased over 15 percent from the previous fiscal year. This reduction in placement caseloads realized by Probation has maintained into year two with the monthly average group home population ranging from 1,052 to 1,058.

SUMMARY OF DIRECT SERVICES

The provision of direct services by the county to children and families during year two under their CAP strategies is summarized below. Detailed information for each strategy is provided in Section C. Implemented Strategies and Expenditures of this report.

For LA DCFS, FTDM has been expanded to provide Permanency Planning Conferences (PPCs) to youth in group home care in an effort to expedite permanency; 922 PPCs have been conducted for identified group home youth under the waiver. YP Units have been staffed, and social workers in these units are carrying reduced caseloads in an effort to locate and connect high need youth with permanency resources. These units currently serve over 200 youth. Since 2008, 1,160 families with 4,230 children have been provided with up-front assessments of substance abuse, domestic violence and/or mental health issues in LA DCFS regional offices and the Emergency Response Command Center (ERCP). The PSSF programs, with their full allocation intact, have been allowed to provide the same level of services to their intended target populations as in the previous year. Actual fiscal year ending counts of numbers served for each program will not be available until the next reporting period.

LA Probation and Department of Mental Health (DMH) have conducted a total of 901 Cross-System Assessments; 209 were completed between January and June 2009. Probation and contracted vendors provided FFT services to 414 youth and families; of this number, 90 youth and families began receiving services during the last six months. Fifty-eight youth and families successfully completed the FFT program during this annual reporting period. The Probation Functional Family Probation/Parole (FFPP) Deputy Probation Officers provided FFPP case management services to 56 youth and families; of these, six have completed the FFPP supervision program requirements.

B. ADMINISTRATIVE ACTIVITIES

The county has identified that LA DCFS and Probation generated reinvestment funds during the first year of the CAP and project spending a portion of this funding, with a majority going to contracted services in the community, in FY 2008-09 and FY 2009-10. Based on the success of first sequence priorities and input from community partners and stakeholders, both Departments developed a second sequence implementation plan for FY 2008-09 and FY 2009-10. On February 3, 2009, the Departments received Board of Supervisors (BOS) approval for the plan and authority to hire staff positions to support the expansion and/or implementation of CAP strategies. A copy of the BOS request for action for the implementation plan is contained in Appendix B.

The waiver management team, including LA DCFS Waiver Coordinator Lisa Parrish, and Probation Waiver Coordinator, Kathy New, remains responsible for planning, coordinating, monitoring, and reporting activities for the project including working with CDSS, Chief Executive Office (CEO), and other Departments, service providers, community partners and other stakeholders.

The two Departments attend bi-monthly implementation meetings with Casey Family Programs and meet monthly with the County Steering Committee to focus on governance, implementation status, financial projections and tracking, and outcomes. In addition to the Steering Committee, LA DCFS and Probation Team members continue to meet or conference by phone on a regular basis. In addition, regular meeting presentations are made to the Board of Supervisors, Justice and Children's Deputies, Children's Commission, and CEO budget analysts on specific LA DCFS and Probation project components. Los Angeles County also participates with the CDSS and Alameda County in monthly waiver coordinator calls, technical assistance (TA) conference calls related to county TA requests, and state/county conference calls and meetings to resolve fiscal issues related to the CAP.

In April 2009, the Probation Department began a significant executive reorganization due to the retirement of two of three Probation Deputy Directors in early 2009. This prompted inter-department promotions and a shift in management at various management levels including Deputy Director, Bureau Chief, Director, and Supervising Deputy Probation Officer. The CAP program priorities and Title IV-E related support efforts primarily fall under the jurisdiction of the Placement Services Bureau, and during the later part of the year, the reorganization had a sizable impact on this Bureau.

Based on feedback and requests from LA DCFS regional staff, community partners and other stakeholders, rather than sponsoring one large, centralized community stakeholder meeting as in years past, LA DCFS convened five regional "Strengthening Community Partnership" events in May 2009. Over 1,000 individuals participated, discussing partnership successes and challenges and planning next steps to keep the partnership momentum going. In addition, both departments' maintain email addresses for information delivery and responses and provide a quarterly email Waiver News Blast to department staff and a global list of interested stakeholders that has been developed.

SPECIFIC PROGRAM AND POLICY CHANGES

Both LA DCFS and Probation identified changes initiated during this year related to CAP implementation. LA DCFS policy has been revised to address the use of PPCs in each of the Department's regional offices; the implementation of up-front assessments in all LA DCFS regional offices and the ERCP; and the operation of YP Units in three LA DCFS offices. In addition, the draft policy addressing the use of Regional Office Community Partner funds has been written.

Probation has implemented a standardized Cross-Systems Assessment Reporting Tool. In addition, a new unit of operation was developed to track all Probation foster care youth and the assistance payments made on their behalf, including Wraparound Services. The newly created Prospective Authorization and Utilization Review Unit is housed within the Placement Administrative Services operation.

As of April 2009, detained youth on a Suitable Placement order are housed in one Department-operated juvenile hall, the Central Juvenile Hall. This action required numerous program and policy changes Department-wide as the change impacts the

daily operations of institutions, Placement Services and transportation. The change expedites service delivery in areas of meeting with youth face-to-face, accessing case records, completing case process requirements, coordinating placements, and expediting outside agency process mandates for group home providers, DMH and Health Services. As of May 2009, one staff was co-located to work with the LA DCFS Revenue Enhancement Section responsible for various components of eligibility processing and financial reconciliation. In June 2009, the Department agreed that Placement Services Bureau staff would be moved in an effort to increase service delivery. Staff slated to relocate include the Placement Unit comprised of twelve staff responsible for Cross-System Assessments and youth movement coordination (detained youth to be moved to group home care).

EVALUATION ACTIVITIES AND DATA TRACKING

During year two, the county participated in the state evaluator activities. In November and December 2008, the evaluator conducted a series of key stakeholder interviews with Los Angeles County's external partners in an effort to identify community involvement and overall understanding of the CAP project. In May 2009 the third round of Los Angeles County focus groups and key participants interviews were conducted with all levels of LA DCFS staff.

LA DCFS, in conjunction with Casey Family Programs and Dr. Jacquelyn McCroskey, are evaluating the Los Angeles Prevention Initiative Demonstration Project (PIDP) and Point of Engagement (POE). The PIDP is an innovative countywide effort to demonstrate effective approaches to reducing child abuse and neglect by creating a comprehensive, strength-based, prevention system. LA DCFS has been able to use the financial flexibility under the CAP to support families through the POE differential response linkages to community-based resources, services and supports.

Dr. McCroskey began conducting interviews in November 2008 in the LA DCFS regional offices with four levels of staff: Regional Administrators, Assistant Regional Administrators, Supervising Children's Social Workers and Children's Social Workers. Interviews are intended to collect information regarding the history, context and implementation of POE in each regional office and the impact of POE on outcomes for children and families.

On November 17, 2008, LA DCFS held a PIDP-POE Learning Session with over 150 attendees from a diverse group of public and private sector agencies and communities; the second PIDP-POE Learning Session was held on April 20, 2009. In each event, representatives from the different Service Planning Areas (SPA) convened during afternoon breakout learning sessions to discuss, compare and contrast their experiences in implementing new strategies to prevent child abuse and neglect in the different regions of Los Angeles County. The Casey Family Programs PIDP mid-course report was issued on January 22, 2009 and the final PIDP evaluation report is scheduled to be completed by August 2009.

Probation has incorporated many of the waiver data needs into a new department automated system that was implemented in March 2009. However, due to the complexities of the new system, several information technology (IT) issues must be resolved in order for the system to deliver data in an accurate and appropriate manner. Once all the IT issues are resolved, the new system will be able to capture the number of active placement youth, number of closed placement cases, average length of stay in out-of-home care, number of placement episodes, number and type of outreach services provided for each case, and assistance payment costs for all Probation Placement youth. Additionally, Probation has continued to work with LA DCFS and the state evaluator in identifying data that are currently available and needed data enhancements. Finally, Probation worked with the state evaluator in conducting both internal focus groups and surveys to identify baseline data for the evaluation.

C. IMPLEMENTED STRATEGIES AND EXPENDITURES

LA DCFS

With the available flexible funds under the CAP, LA DCFS continued to expand *Family Team Decision Making (FTDM)*, *Family Finding and Engagement*, and *Up-front Assessments* over the second year of the project. For the period of July 2008 to December 2008, the total amount of expenditures incurred for these strategies is \$1,873,324. This amount includes salaries and employee benefits in the amount of \$1,498,659 and Indirect Costs in the amount of \$374,665. For the period of January 2009 to June 2009, the total amount of expenditures incurred for these strategies is \$2,022,829. This amount includes salaries and employee benefits in the amount of \$1,560,303, Indirect Costs in the amount of \$390,076, and Contract Services of Upfront Assessment/Family Preservation Expansion in the amount of \$72,450.

EXPANSION OF FAMILY TEAM DECISION MAKING CONFERENCES

LA DCFS has increased the number of FTDM facilitators by fourteen so that regular multi-disciplinary team conferences could be held for children placed in group homes or in foster care for two years or longer with no identified permanency resource. TDM facilitators receive ongoing training on facilitation, and LA DCFS receives technical assistance for this from the Annie E. Casey Foundation's California Family-to-Family consultants. At the time PPCs were implemented, 1,050 youth who met the criteria for a PPC TDM resided in group home placement. This number of youth in group home placement has decreased to 862, with 94 youth returned to the home of a parent or placed with a relative. PPCs have also resulted in over 100 youth being identified for a lower level of care. From the period July 1, 2008 to December 31, 2008, an additional 408 permanency planning conferences were held. In the second half of the year, from January 1, 2009 through May 31, 2009, an additional 240 TDM PPCs were held; to date, over 90 percent of the youth in group home placement who meet PPC criteria have received an initial PPC. As a result, the 14 specialized facilitators will now begin expanding PPCs to include children placed in out of home care for two years or longer with no permanency resource.

FOCUSED FAMILY FINDING AND ENGAGEMENT THROUGH PILOT SPECIALIZED PERMANENCY UNITS AT THREE REGIONAL OFFICES

Specialized YP Units were established to target LA DCFS' older high need youth most at risk of aging out of foster care with no permanent connections. As of June 2009, all three regional offices, Metro North, Pomona, and Santa Clarita, were operational and fully staffed with six Children's Social Workers (CSW) and one Supervising Children's Social Worker (SCSW) per office. Due to reduced caseloads of fifteen and expert training, YP Unit CSWs are better able to establish relationships with the youth and focus their energies on identifying and reconnecting the youth with family.

The Metro North YP Unit currently serves 79 youth. Of these 79 youth, one returned home, one is under legal guardianship, ten were placed with relatives, six were placed in lower levels of care, 11 have plans of adoption, and 11 have plans of guardianship. Forty-six of the youth currently being served who were previously identified as having no or limited connections with family now have ongoing visits with siblings or other family members, and 16 youth have been placed with siblings with whom they were not previously placed.

The Pomona YP Unit currently serves 85 youth. Of these 85 youth, 12 youth moved into lower levels of care; in addition, five youth were placed with relatives, three were reunified with parents, ten have a plan of adoption, and 14 have a plan of guardianship. Seventy-nine youth who are currently served by the Pomona YP Unit and were previously identified as having no or limited connections with family now have ongoing visits with siblings and other family members.

The Santa Clarita YP Unit currently serves 55 youth. During the reporting period, one youth has reunified with parents, one successfully exited the system through adoption, two have adoption plans, 12 have legal guardianship plans, two were placed with relatives, and 12 have moved to lower levels of care. In addition, 37 youth who are currently served by the Santa Clarita Unit and were previously identified as having no or limited connections with family now have ongoing visits with siblings and other family members.

UP-FRONT ASSESSMENTS ON HIGH RISK CASES FOR DOMESTIC VIOLENCE, SUBSTANCE ABUSE AND MENTAL HEALTH ISSUES

Up-Front Assessments continue to be conducted on the target population of families with high-risk Hotline referrals; experts in substance abuse, domestic violence and mental health services provide immediate, comprehensive assessments, and connect families to treatment and ancillary services in the community. These services allow Emergency Response (ER) CSWs to make more informed case decisions, and in many cases, permit children to remain safely in their homes.

LA DCFS has contracted with SHIELDS for Families to provide up-front assessments for the Compton Office since October 1, 2007. In May 2008, two additional regional offices, Metro North and Wateridge, and the ERCP, which handles referrals of child

abuse and neglect at night, on weekends and holidays, began implementing and utilizing up-front assessments in a limited fashion, with additional contracted agencies in their SPAs. Between November 2008 and April 2009, up-front assessments expanded to the remaining LA DCFS regional offices; as of April 13, 2009, 40 Family Preservation Agencies have been contracted to conduct up-front assessments and assessments are available to all LA DCFS regional offices and ERCP. Between October 1, 2007 and June 30, 2009, up-front assessments have been provided to 1,160 families with 4,230 children. These assessments resulted in removals (voluntary and court) for just 131 families.

PROMOTING SAFE AND STABLE FAMILIES PROGRAMS

For FY 2008-2009, LA DCFS utilized approximately \$970,000 in CAP funds to restore federal cuts made to PSSF Programs, including Family Support, Family Preservation, Time-Limited Family Reunification Services, and Adoption Promotion Services and Support. Utilizing these funds has allowed the contract providers to continue to provide the full array of contracted services in the period from July 1, 2008 to June 30, 2009. Without these funds, LA DCFS would have had to reduce contracts for these services in the middle of the contract year.

COUNTYWIDE PREVENTION INITIATIVE/DIFFERENTIAL RESPONSE

On February 26, 2008, LA DCFS' \$5 million Prevention Initiative Demonstration Project (PIDP) was approved by the Board of Supervisors through June 30, 2009. Eight contracts were approved to establish lead agencies in each of the SPA. Initially began as a 12-month project, an additional four months of time was obtained by LA DCFS for the lead agencies and their LA DCFS regional partners to be able to fully develop and implement their prevention strategies and initiatives. All lead agencies implemented their plans in July 2008. During the current year, LA DCFS earmarked \$6 million for prevention strategies starting in FY 2009-2010. One of the funded strategies for which \$3.76 million has been allocated is a second year of the LA DCFS PIDP, which was approved by the Board of Supervisors on June 9, 2009. Second year funding comes from two sources: \$1.24 million from the Los Angeles CEO's Services Integration Branch and \$3.76 million from CAP reinvestment funds.

The second funded prevention strategy, currently under development and for which \$1.5 million has been allocated, is Los Angeles County's implementation of Differential Response Path One. Differential Response Path One will connect Child Protection Hotline "evaluated out" referrals/families to voluntary services and resources. The goal of this initiative is to reduce the Hotline re-referral rate for these families and to prevent them from becoming open referrals due to child abuse and neglect. The earliest projected implementation date for the effort is October 2009.

As referenced earlier in this report, the evaluation of PIDP is conducted through a collaborative of Casey Family Programs, First 5 LA, and Dr. Jacquelyn McCroskey of the University of Southern California. The goals of the evaluation are threefold: identify best practices which can be replicated countywide; identify successful leveraging

strategies between and within the Community Based Organizations, County agencies and private business; and provide DCFS with results to be used to restructure current contracting processes to become more client delivery focused. A mid-year evaluation of the project was completed in January 2009, to look at initial promising best practices that were emerging from the first six months of implementation, and the final evaluation is expected to be available no later than August 2009.

REGIONAL OFFICE COMMUNITY PARTNERING

CAP funding will be provided to LA DCFS regional offices to promote collaboration via events to deepen the work with community partners on key reform issues and expanding prevention services, such as eliminating racial disproportionality and disparity, increasing child safety and reducing timelines to permanency. LA DCFS has identified a Program Manager for this effort and prepared draft policy instructing regional offices on the protocol to access Community Partnering funds.

PROBATION

Probation continued to implement *Cross-Systems Case Assessment and Case Planning (CSA)* and *Expansion of Functional Family Therapy (FFT)*. Additionally, a third probation program priority is being implemented in the second year of the CAP, *establishment of a Prospective Authorization and Utilization Review Unit (PAUR)*.

ENHANCED CROSS-SYSTEMS CASE ASSESSMENT AND CASE PLANNING

Probation and DMH continued to utilize the Cross-Systems Case Assessment and Planning Initiative implemented in the first year of the CAP. CSA was designed to pair mental health clinicians and therapists with Placement Deputy Probation Officers (DPO) to provide integrated and coordinated assessments of delinquency risk and protective factors and mental health functioning of youth ordered Suitable Placement by the Court. CSAs are used to identify treatment service needs and match probationers with appropriate group home providers.

During the period from January 2009 through June 2009, it was determined that Probation had no CSA tracking tool in place and was relying on DMH to track CSA data. A review of Probation and DMH CSA documentation revealed discrepancies in the total number of CSAs conducted prior to January 2009. The review identified a number of factors including communication gaps that resulted in CSAs being conducted for replacement as opposed to “new” Suitable Placement cases, as originally designed.

To address these issues, Probation implemented a CSA Steering Committee comprised of DMH staff and impacted Probation managers from Title IV-E Management, Placement Administrative Services, Placement Residential Based Services and Placement Quality Assurance. In addition, impacted Supervising DPOs (SDPO) and DPOs are invited to attend Steering Committee meetings to provide input and feedback on all components of the CSA.

The Steering Committee is charged with identifying and memorializing all agreements made to increase service delivery, including developing appropriate processes, procedures and policies for the implementation of the daily activities of the CSA program; developing and implementing an Memorandum of Understanding between DMH and Probation that outlines roles and responsibilities; developing and/or modifying data tracking tools; and developing enhancements to the existing CSA report tool. This effort has enhanced communication between all impacted stakeholders, at every level.

DMH reviewed all CSAs conducted and reported that between July 2007 and June 2009, Probation and DMH conducted 901 CSAs; 209 were conducted during the current reporting period. As of June 15, 2009, the CSA team has only conducted CSAs on Placement youth that have a new Suitable Placement order.

EXPANSION OF FUNCTIONAL FAMILY THERAPY

Probation has adopted FFT as a first line treatment approach to serve the CAP target population with community based supportive after-care services. Five FFT teams are providing the services; two teams are Probation in-house FFT interventionists, and the remaining three teams are provided by county contracted vendors, SHIELDS for Families and Starview Treatment Center. Probation's two FFT teams began their second year of program implementation in June 2009. Two FFT DPOs (FFT interventionists) were recommended by the FFT National Organization and California Institute of Mental Health to be FFT Site Supervisors, one for each team. Probation management concurred and the two staff were enrolled in FFT mandated Site Supervisor Training. Staff completed the first of three trainings in June 2009.

On December 1, 2008, SDPOs in the Placement Aftercare Community Transition Services (PACTS) received training in Functional Family Probation/Parole (FFPP). The DPOs will use the new model of supervision once they have completed the training, as required by the National FFPP program. This training, coordinated by the California Institute for Mental Health (CiMH), will continue until all 40 PACTS DPOs are trained in FFPP. To date, the Probation FFPP DPOs have provided FFPP case management services to 56 youth and families; of these, six have completed the FFPP supervision program requirements.

Probation has continued to use a blended funding strategy to cover program costs, utilizing IV-E reinvestment dollars and Medi-Cal. As of December 31, 2008, Probation had enrolled 274 placement youth and their families in FFT. Of this number, 58 youth have successfully graduated FFT. To date, under the CAP, Probation has provided FFT services to 414 youth and families. Of these, 90 youth and families began receiving FFT services during January 2009 to June 2009. Youth identified for program participation were Probation Placement youth previously residing in congregate care who were released to the care and custody of their parents with FFT services.

During the current year, Probation received CEO approval to hire staff responsible for the implementation of FFT program enhancement for Parent Daily Reviews (PDR). PDRs are a component of the evidence-based Multidimensional Treatment Foster Care

program. Community Workers will conduct PDRs for all youth that have transitioned from group home care to the community. They support supervision by providing crucial information on a family's progress during the first 60 days of family reunification. The PDRs will allow the DPO of record and the treatment teams to make appropriate interventions, if needed, to support reunification. It is anticipated that this effort will improve response time to youth and family needs while reducing the percentage of youth that re-enter the foster care system and/or fall deeper into the juvenile justice system due to antisocial behaviors that could lead to high levels of care such as Camp Community Placement.

RESTRUCTURE OF PLACEMENT SERVICES

At the onset of the CAP, Probation began to restructure the Placement Services Bureau in an effort to enhance service delivery to youth and families and meet program goals. Three efforts that have supported restructure efforts: 1) the development and implementation of a Placement Restructuring Steering Committee, 2) a Probation Placement Practice Model, and 3) weekly Placement Services Bureau Management meetings. The Steering Committee is charged with assisting in the identification of needed system improvements and administrative infrastructure needs. Due to the time required to implement some of the identified internal system improvements coupled with a Department wide reorganization of executive administrators in April 2009, the Placement Restructuring Committee was placed on a temporary hiatus. It is anticipated that this committee will reconvene in late 2009.

Casey Family Programs continues to support the Department's restructuring efforts by providing consultant services focused on the development and implementation of the Department's Placement Practice Model initially developed in 2008, with most recent revisions made in June 2009. The Practice Model is a day-to-day work guide that: describes practice from case opening to case closure and outlines practice principles, practice sequences and techniques. The Practice Model serves as an organizational ideology that includes definitions and explanations regarding how staff is to partner with stakeholders in the delivery of services to achieve positive outcomes.

Weekly Placement Management Meetings focus on the development of an assignment matrix that helps assess efficiency, re-deploy resources, define roles and ensure the synergistic effort of the entire team with a view towards meeting the Department's stated goals. These meetings are also geared to strengthen strategic planning efforts, identify the most effective approaches to deliver outreach services, and ensure that youth and families are being served in an effective, productive and appropriate manner.

UTILIZATION OF AFTERCARE SUPPORT SERVICES

The PACTS is responsible for two units of operation, an in-house FFT Unit and a FFPP Unit. During year two, the PACTS operation continued to provide critical overall support to the youth and families that enrolled in FFT and ensured that youth experienced a seamless transition from the group home to community. PACTS DPOs carry reduced caseloads and work in concert with multi-systemic therapy and FFT providers. FFPP is

an evidence-based case management practice for juvenile justice workers who are charged with supervision of youth in a community setting. Traditional supervision models are commonly set up to monitor only adjudicated youth. FFPP's primary strength is in employing the support of family and/or community members. By strengthening the family support system, the FFPP practice model greatly increases the likelihood for long term success for the youth and families Probation serves. FFPP is a supervision model based on the principles of FFT. FFPP DPOs work with families to address the role each member has in generating, and ultimately resolving, problem behavior. FFPP works through the following three phases: engage and motivate; support and monitor; and generalize.

To be FFPP model adherent, Probation FFPP staff must participate in mandated scheduled interactions with a certified FFPP contracted consultant, including: weekly conference calls, SDPO conference calls and in-person trainings. Additionally, FFPP maintains a program requirement that each SDPO accompany the DPOs of record to weekly home visits to observe the DPOs implementation of FFPP. This helps familiarize the SDPO with individual cases and each DPO's style to better supervise staff utilizing the FFP model. As referenced earlier, all DPOs completed the initial FFPP training in January 2009. On the recommendation of the FFPP consultant, cases assigned prior to the FFPP training will not be supervised using the FFPP case management model, as it would not be effective to change modalities in the middle of working with a case. All new cases assigned after January 2009 are supervised using the FFPP case management model. In June 2009, FFPP DPOs carried caseloads between approximately 16 to 24 cases, and during the last six months, the FFPP DPOs provided FFPP supervision to approximately 58 youth and families. An effort has been made to terminate or transfer eligible non-FFP cases to make space for new cases with the goal of caseloads comprised exclusively of FFP cases. Percentages of FFP cases per caseload vary greatly from unit to unit, as some DPOs have received more new cases due to being fairly new to PACTS.

THE PROSPECTIVE AUTHORIZATION AND UTILIZATION REVIEW UNIT

As a new activity for year two, Probation received CEO approval to hire staff responsible for the implementation and daily operations of the Prospective Authorization and Utilization Review (PAUR) program. PAUR was established to assist in the decision making process to match youth and families with appropriate services and improve consistency in service utilization. Under the PAUR program referrals to services will be pre-approved based on whether or not a youth and family meet the specified focus for each service. This unit will be responsible for reviewing the use of each of these services at designated intervals to ensure that there is a systematic rationale that allows for extended services that may be required to obtain desired outcomes on a case-by-case basis. PAUR will improve Probation's ability to strategically manage and maximize available resources. In April 2009, a Probation Director was identified to implement the unit and begin working with Department managers on implementation strategies. Staff recruitment efforts are underway at this time.

ADDITIONAL LOS ANGELES COUNTY EFFORTS SUPPORTING CAP OUTCOMES

Over the last year, Los Angeles County has been participating in a national system improvement initiative. Increased national attention has been focused on court-involved youth in both the child welfare and juvenile justice systems. This population, commonly known as crossover youth, is the focus of a Child Welfare and Juvenile Justice Breakthrough Series Collaborative (BSC) sponsored by Georgetown University and Casey Family Programs. This BSC involves seven jurisdictions, including Los Angeles County, and utilizes a quality improvement methodology designed to enable participating teams to make dramatic improvements in a focused practice area (crossover youth) over a short period of time. The intention of a BSC is not to create an entire new body of knowledge, but to fill the gap between what has been identified as best practice and what is actually practiced in the field.

A Senior Leaders Team including Judge Michael Nash, Juvenile Court; Chief Robert Taylor, Probation Department; and Director Trish Ploehn, LA DCFS, heads the Los Angeles team. Over the past nine months, the Senior Leaders, along with our Core team comprised of a parent, youth and representatives from LA DCFS, Probation and DMH, have been engaged in learning the BSC methodology. The methodology is designed to help participating jurisdictions quickly test and fully implement best practices that are designed to drive system integration efforts which can be sustainable over time. The BSC method for attaining system improvement for crossover youth is achieved through learning sessions conducted by faculty members of the Center for Juvenile Justice Reform at Georgetown University. Learning is also achieved through participation in monthly All Collaborative Conference calls involving the seven jurisdictions, and the sharing of information through an Extranet website. These learning opportunities provide a platform for the participating jurisdictions to design and implement precise "small tests of change" that are tested, studied and retested for spread within the target area.

The BSC is grounded in a "Change Package" that identifies six broad system components necessary for improving child welfare and juvenile justice agencies' practices. The goal is to achieve system change through "small tests of change" driven by rapid Plan-Do-Study-Act (PDSA) cycles. PDSA cycles are the foundation of the rapid changes that are witnessed in a BSC. Instead of spending weeks, months, or years planning for massive system reform efforts, teams are encouraged to test ideas rapidly. The Los Angeles team has centered its effort and PDSAs around active engagement of family and youth in the planning, decision-making, and the treatment and recovery process. Some of the small tests of change conducted through the PDSAs have included: 1) improved school/home connection through the TDM process, 2) transition of a dual status youth to camp through the Multi-Disciplinary Team (MDT) process, 3) parent and youth satisfaction surveys, and 4) a community forum on improving outcomes for crossover youth.

The greatest change efforts have resulted from the community forum PDSA "small test of change" that was held. This forum generated other PDSAs, one of which has resulted in the establishment of a dedicated unit for crossover youth in detention located

at Central Juvenile Hall. The crossover youth selected the unit name and participated in the unit's program design. Future small tests of change will address the pressing issue of disproportionate minority confinement (DMC). The county is presently preparing PDSAs to address DMC that will involve a cultural broker in the MDT assessment in order to improve our decision-making outcomes. LA DCFS and Probation will also be mapping, identifying, and evaluating decision-making points to impact DMC.

Through the BSC learning sessions, ongoing information sharing by the participating jurisdictions, and learning from the PDSAs, the county has begun to develop a more effective practice model and continuum for the care and treatment for crossover youth. The BSC started in July of 2008 and will conclude in September of 2009. Over the next four months, the county will concentrate efforts on continued development of the Elite Family Crossover Unit and in replicating the best practices that have resulted from the studies of their PDSAs and learning sessions. The county anticipates integrating the work of the core team with the Assembly Bill 129 Pilot. By integrating these efforts, Los Angeles County will be better able to sustain the BSC developed practice model and to leverage resources and expertise towards system improvement for crossover youth.

County Implementation Barriers

Previously identified barriers related to the fiscal systems for the CAP have continued into year two for both counties. Specifically, an increased workload has been generated by the use of manual systems to capture and track data and funding sources. Los Angeles County also identified additional barriers related to staffing and probation data. The counties have requested assistance from CDSS in removing barriers related to use of Child Welfare Services/Case Management System (CWS/CMS) for probation staff. Access to CWS/CMS data for probation is currently being implemented statewide and should be completed during the upcoming year.

LA DCFS identified the following ongoing areas:

- Shortage of staff required to monitor up-front assessment implementation; and,
- Lack of an automated system to track expenditures and revenue in more detail, requiring LA DCFS to create manual spreadsheets to accurately identify and track data and funding sources.

Probation identified data related issues including:

- Inability to obtain additional required CAP expenditure information, specifically funds used for Wraparound Services. Probation, through its collaboration with LA DCFS, has obtained detailed expenditure reports for Wraparound and placement, and an exhaustive interdepartmental DCFS/Probation data reconciliation is currently underway. This reconciliation will allow for the tracking and monitoring of accurate expenditure data beginning in FY 2009-2010. In an effort to ensure optimal data accuracy, LA DCFS and Probation continue to work together to continuously improve their information-sharing and data reconciliation methods.

- Difficulty reconciling Probation records and accessing CWS/CMS data, requiring a significant workforce effort for Probation.
- Lack of an automated system to track Probation placement expenditures, requiring Probation to create separate spreadsheets to accurately identify and manually track data for each placement case and all case activity to identify projected assistance payment costs and/or reductions as well as numerous trend data.

State Initiatives/Pilot Programs

The spending flexibility under the CAP provides counties the opportunity to test alternate funding models, provide innovative services, and to implement best practices and evidenced-based programs. Updated Los Angeles County activities include:

RESIDENTIALLY-BASED SERVICES REFORM INITIATIVE

LA DCFS is participating in Residentially-Based Services (RBS) Reform (Assembly Bill 1435, Chapter 466, Statutes of 2007) to pilot an alternative group home program design and funding model. The model is designed to provide concurrent wraparound services to youth and their families while youth are placed in selected rate classification level (RCL) 12 and 14 group homes for reduced lengths of stay, and ongoing wraparound and community-based care after the youth exit residential care. Funding for concurrent wraparound services will come from savings realized from reduced lengths of stay, and a risk pool will set aside funding for youth with extended stays and unanticipated costs.

On October 15, 2008, Los Angeles County issued a Request for Information to test market interest in providing RBS services. LA DCFS subsequently submitted a contract request letter to CDSS in order to add RBS as an amendment to current provider contracts and upcoming Wraparound contracts. The CDSS contract extension approval letter was issued in late January 2009. On November 5th and 6th, 2008, LA DCFS, DMH administrative staff, and several county providers attended a RBS symposium that highlighted RBS implementation challenges and technical assistance for developing RBS plans. A preliminary review of the Los Angeles program design was completed on October 17, 2008. LA DCFS presented their updated deliverables and implementation plan at the RBS forum on March 4th and 5th, 2009.

The RBS Collaborative finished working with its RBS consultants, DMH, Community Care Licensing, and provider agencies on an implementation plan, which was submitted to CDSS on June 6, 2009, and includes the voluntary agreement, alternate funding model, and waiver request. Three provider agencies (Five Acres, Hathaway-Sycamores and Hillside) have been selected to implement the RBS Demonstration Project, which will initially target any RCL 12-14 eligible DCFS youth already placed in the three providers' residential campuses. These agencies will complete their RBS unit conversion and identify potential unit conversion youth in August 2009. Only LA DCFS youth will participate in the RBS Demonstration Project; probation and youth placed under DMH will not participate at this time. The project plans to serve approximately 160 youth over a two-year period.

The Los Angeles County Evaluation Subcommittee and the CWS/CMS Workgroup continue to develop a baseline data methodology to compare youth before and after RBS. The Child and Adolescent Needs and Strengths – Child Welfare (CANS-CW), Youth Services Survey and Youth Services Survey-Families were discussed and reviewed and will be used to collect data to measure RBS project outcomes (permanency, child safety and child well-being) for evaluation and quality improvement. Division Chief, Dr. Michael Rauso, will begin discussions regarding implementation of the RBS Demonstration Project with LA DCFS 18 office Regional Administrators in July 2009. In addition, RBS Project training curriculum will be finalized, and conjoint training will be provided to LA DCFS and the three provider agencies staff in July 2009.

LOS ANGELES COUNTY INTENSIVE TREATMENT FOSTER CARE PILOT PROGRAM

Under the CAP, LA DCFS received approval for a state waiver to allow Foster Family Agency (FFA) rate flexibility to provide innovative services through a pilot Intensive Treatment Foster Care (ITFC) program. The pilot will develop ITFC beds for 72 children and Multi-dimensional Treatment Foster Care (MTFC) beds for 60 children, as alternatives to placing children in group homes.

LA DCFS continues to make efforts to expand the number of ITFC and MTFC beds available for appropriate youth. However, due to the behavioral and emotional problem of youth served by these programs, recruiting interested, appropriate foster parents continues to be challenging. Three FFAs each have been contracted to provide ITFC and MTFC beds, and LA DCFS intends to conduct Procurement by Negotiation to expand both programs. As of June 25, 2009, 30 beds are available, and 18 youth are placed in these ITFC and MTFC homes. Between the two programs, 17 additional beds are in development in various stages of certification.

EVALUATION STATUS

Evaluation Overview

The CDSS has contracted with the San Jose State University Research Foundation to conduct an independent, third party evaluation consisting of a process evaluation, outcome evaluation, and a cost analysis. The primary purpose of the CAP evaluation is to determine whether and how changes in the funding structure for foster care (i.e., ending the entitlement, eliminating eligibility restrictions, and capping the dollar amount in exchange for spending flexibility) will impact the functioning of county child welfare systems and relevant probation systems. The secondary purpose of the evaluation is to assess outcomes for dependent and delinquent children and their families before and after implementation of the CAP. The evaluation uses an interrupted time series design to assess for change over time.

In the second year of the CAP, the majority of evaluation activities were in support of the data collection for the process study component. A third round of site visits were conducted in both counties and interviews were conducted with various external stakeholders. Data collection also began for the fiscal study. This section describes current year activities covering the period between July 1, 2008 and June 30, 2009.

Activities Completed

PROCESS STUDY

Ongoing data collection and data analysis were the predominant process study activities during this reporting period. Data collection consisted primarily of semi-structured focus groups and semi-structured key informant interviews conducted with representatives from the CDSS, the counties, and county stakeholders. The protocol questions used for both interviews and focus groups concentrated on implementation and operating in a capped allocation environment as well as on services. Information regarding services was also collected with the Services Survey. In addition, relevant documents were reviewed and analyzed for information about implementation, operations, and services.

A second round of key informant interviews were conducted with representatives from the CDSS both in-person and via the telephone between September and November 2008. The purpose of the interviews was to solicit input about the implementation of the CAP from the perspective of the state agency representatives overseeing the project. Interviewees included five individuals from the programmatic and fiscal areas involved with the CAP's implementation. The protocol used to guide the semi-structured key informant interviews with CDSS representatives is contained in Appendix C.

The key informant interviews usually conducted during the site visits to counties were expanded during this annual reporting period to include a variety of local stakeholders in the CAP. Beginning in September 2008, at the request of the evaluator, representatives

from both counties' child welfare and probation departments provided contact information for the juvenile court presiding judge, members of the Board of Supervisors, the county administrator/executive office, and key union representatives in their respective counties. County representatives also provided a list of additional community stakeholders that they felt had an important perspective on the CAP. These community stakeholders included local children's commissions, service provider representatives, and community advocacy organizations.

Five of the twelve stakeholders provided by the county representatives and contacted beginning in October 2008, were interviewed by the end of the reporting period, owing to scheduling challenges. Interviewees include a representative from the county administrator's/executive's office in both counties, a representative from a county's juvenile court, a representative from a county's board of supervisors, and representatives from a county's commission for children and families. The interviews were conducted in-person and via the telephone. The protocol used to guide the semi-structured interviews with local stakeholders is also contained in Appendix C.

Site visits to both counties were also conducted during this annual reporting period. The protocol used to guide both the semi-structured focus groups and the semi-structured interviews for Child Welfare and Probation is provided in Appendix C.

In Alameda County, focus groups were held during the site visit in June 2009, with the Department of Children and Family Services (DCFS). Key informant interviews with administrators from the department were scheduled to occur early in the next reporting period. Focus groups and key informant interviews were not conducted with representatives from the Probation Department during the site visit in Alameda County in June. The department was facing the possibility of layoffs and a departmental reorganization due to budget cuts at the time the June site visit was being scheduled. After consulting with Probation Department representatives, the focus groups and key informant interviews have been tentatively scheduled for some time in August 2009.

A site visit was also conducted in Los Angeles (LA) County in May 2009. During the site visit, the evaluation staff conducted key informant interviews and focus groups with administrators and staff from the LA DCFS and Probation Department. Several key informant interviews were conducted via the telephone.

Focus groups were conducted with frontline staff (child welfare workers and deputy probation officers), supervisors (child welfare supervisors and supervising probation officers), managers (child welfare program managers and probation managers and directors), and fiscal staff. Key staff from both departments in participating counties served as evaluation liaisons, working with the evaluator to organize the site visits. The evaluation liaisons were responsible for scheduling the focus groups as well as recruiting participants, seeking to enlist up to ten individuals per focus group. Additionally, the liaisons sought to ensure that the various practice areas (emergency response, family maintenance, and family reunification) and geographic regions were represented in the focus groups. Focus groups were approximately two hours in length.

Table 1 displays the number of focus group participants by county and department for each site visit.

Table 1: Number of Focus Group Participants by Organization

County	Department	Site Visit Number of Participants
Alameda	Child Welfare Workers (2 groups)	12
	Child Welfare Supervisors (2 groups)	8
	Child Welfare Managers (1 group)	13
	Deputy Probation Officers (1 group)	0
	Supervising Probation Officers (1 group)	0
	Managers (1 group)	0
Los Angeles		
	Child Welfare Workers (2 groups)	20
	Child Welfare Supervisors (2 groups)	15
	Child Welfare Managers (1 group)	8
	Fiscal Staff	9
	Deputy Probation Officers (1 group)	10
	Supervising Probation Officers (1 group)	10
	Managers (1 group)	5

County key informant interviews were conducted with executive-level county department administrators (program and fiscal). Key informant interviews took approximately sixty minutes to complete. Table 2 displays the number of interview participants by county and department for each site visit.

Table 2: Number of Interview Participants by Organization

County	Department	Site Visit Number of Participants
Alameda	Child Welfare	0
	Probation	0
Los Angeles	Child Welfare	6
	Probation	5

Transcription of the focus group conversations and the key informant interviews from the audiotapes for the second round of site visits and part of the third round were completed during this annual reporting period. The process of coding the transcripts for analysis, conducting the analysis, and preparing for the interim evaluation report also continued over this period.

The site visit activities completed during year two have gone well, with the exception of the scheduling delay with the Alameda County Probation Department. Liaisons from the county departments were crucial in recommending key stakeholders, organizing the site visits, and making staff available for the focus groups and key informant interviews.

Participants in the county focus groups and the county and state department interviews continued to be enthusiastic and provided well-considered responses to questions.

County evaluation liaisons also played a key role in the second administration of the Services Survey. The survey contains questions about services offered in the areas of prevention/diversion, reducing lengths of stay, reducing level of care, engaging families in service planning, and sources of funding. The survey also contains an inventory of services possibly provided by the county and can be found in Appendix C.

The Services Surveys were sent to representatives in each of the four county departments in February 2009. Completed surveys were received from Alameda DCFS and LA DCFS in May 2009. By the end of the project year, surveys had not yet been received from either Probation Department, though representatives indicated they were still in the process of completing the documents.

In addition to the analysis of the focus group and interview data, Services Survey data, and relevant documents, on-going data analysis by the evaluator also included information collected from the Frontline/Supervisor Staff Survey. Information from the survey included staff's understanding of the CAP, their attitudes toward the CAP, and the impact the CAP has on their work with children and families. This survey was conducted during the preceding reporting period.

FISCAL STUDY

In the fiscal study portion of the evaluation, the primary activity during the first half of the year was to continue the process for obtaining the necessary data from the identified data sources. Based on discussions with state and county fiscal staff taking place during year one, it was determined that the main data source for the fiscal study would be the County Expense Claim (CEC), the CA 800, and the IV-E Waiver Database developed by CDSS for the CAP.

Beginning mid-year, the evaluation team contracted with a fiscal consultant to provide assistance in interpreting the data available in the CEC and CA 800. The evaluation team determined that the county fiscal departments would be the best source for the data and would also have detailed knowledge about that county's fiscal information and be able to respond to evaluation team questions.

The request for the first round (Fiscal Year 2007-08) of fiscal information was sent to counties in April 2009, and the information was received from the counties in May 2009. The request for the second round (Fiscal Year 2006-07) of fiscal information was sent to counties in June 2009. The information was received from LA DCFS before the end of the annual reporting period and should be received from Alameda DCFS in July 2009. The relevant data are in the process of being pulled from the various reports and entered into a data management system for analysis.

OUTCOME STUDY

The activities conducted for the outcome study focused on tracking any changes in the California Child Welfare Services Outcome and Accountability System and determining the availability of probation data in the system. Work has continued toward securing the necessary outcome data from the probation system in both counties. As a result of the CDSS data unit increasing the amount of information extracted from the single source of information provided by county probation departments to CDSS regarding children served using Title IV-E funds, probation data is accessible through the CDSS and University of California at Berkeley Collaboration, Child Welfare Services Dynamic Report System Website despite probation's lack of direct access to Child Welfare Services/Case Management System (CWS/CMS).

To address the challenges of obtaining probation data through the CWS/CMS system, both probation departments in the CAP counties are performing a labor-intensive data validation process to ensure the accuracy of the data available in the CWS/CMS reports. As part of a statewide effort to ensure valid data, CDSS has been working with all counties to manually review and close out open cases that have no placement or services indicated on CWS/CMS. In addition, both county probation departments have data development projects underway to increase the availability of outcome data, and efforts are underway at the CDSS to ensure that county probation departments have access to the CWS/CMS system in a way that allows them to directly enter information.

ADDITIONAL EVALUATION ACTIVITIES

In July 2008, the evaluator participated in both the Alameda County Title IV-E Waiver Community Forum and the Los Angeles County Title IV-E Waiver Learning Organization Group (LOG). At both events, the evaluator provided an overview of the evaluation including a description of the study components, status of evaluation activities, and several preliminary observations about the implementation of the CAP.

In June 2009, the evaluator participated on a panel presentation at the quarterly California Child Welfare Council meeting. The council is a state advisory body created under Assembly Bill 2216 (Statutes of 2006). The panel included representatives from Alameda County, Los Angeles County, and Santa Clara County and panelists discussed their county's child welfare operations as waiver and non-waiver counties. The evaluator provided a brief overview of the evaluation design and data collection activities. Hiring processes for additional evaluation staff were conducted during the current year. A graduate student researcher was hired in October 2008 and assisted in the data analysis up until April 2009, and a Ph.D. level research specialist was also hired and began working on the evaluation in January 2009.

Interim Findings

Several preliminary observations emerged to date from the process study portion of the evaluation.

First, there appears to be a basic understanding of what the CAP is amongst frontline staff and supervisors; that it is not a program but a funding mechanism, or a change in a funding mechanism. This basic understanding seems to hold true for both departments in both counties.

Second, there was a supposition at the start of the CAP that in order for county departments to operate within a capped allocation environment, they would need to alter their operations to lower the number of youth entering their systems, reduce the length of time youth had contact with the system, and reduce the per case cost of operating the system. This was particularly true for the Departments of Children and Family Services. Although not originally anticipated, initial site visits and interviews with county representatives revealed that many of the necessary activities were already being implemented primarily under the framework of the Annie E. Casey Foundation Family to Family Initiative.

Third, both county child welfare departments were well-positioned to take advantage of the capped allocation fiscal strategy opportunity under the waiver. As mentioned, the Family to Family philosophy had been integrated fairly well into each counties practice model, conveniently coinciding with the basic requirements for the necessary fiscal model. Importantly, the approach taken and the years used to determine the base allocation benefitted the two departments in terms of the amount they would receive under their capped allocation. Perhaps equally importantly, both counties had leaders who were able to marshal the necessary support, both internally and externally, to take advantage of the opportunity presented by the waiver demonstration project.

Finally, there is some variation in how the CAP is being used by the county departments. In general, the Departments of Children and Family Services in both counties are using the CAP to expand on existing services and service philosophies. The Departments of Juvenile Probation view the CAP as an opportunity to make changes to their service delivery systems and service philosophies, in the direction already undertaken by their counterparts in child welfare.

A discussion of these observations, as well as additional provisional findings, will be presented in the Interim Evaluation Report due to be submitted in February 2010.

APPENDICES

- Appendix A: Alameda County Documents
- Appendix B: Los Angeles County Documents
- Appendix C: Evaluation Data Collection Protocols